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MONTHLY

MAGAZINE;

COMPREHENDING

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, MORALITY, RELIGION, AND OTHER USEFUL AND INTERESTING MATTER.

VOL. I.] FEBRUARY, 1806. [No. 2.

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The advancement of our minds in this world, towards that perfection of which they are to be possessed in the next, should be the grand object of our attention. HORNE.

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MONTHLY

MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.] FEBRUARY, 1806. [No. 2.

NATURAL THEOLOGY.

[*Continued from page* 4.]

OF THE DIVINE EXISTENCE.

THAT we ourselves and innumerable other things exist, may be taken for granted, as a first principle, as evident as any axiom in Euclid. Hence we infer, that something must always have existed. For if ever there was a time when nothing existed, there must have been a time when something began to be; and that something must have come into being without a cause; since, by the supposition, there was nothing before it. But that a thing should begin to exist, and yet proceed from no cause, is both absurd and inconceivable; all men, by the law of their nature, being necessarily determined to believe, that whatever begins to exist, proceeds from some cause: Therefore, some being must have existed from eternity. This being must have been either dependent on something else, or not dependent on any thing else. Now, an eternal succession of dependent beings, or a being which is dependent, and yet exists from eternity, is impossible. For if every part of such a succession be dependent, then the whole must be so: and if the whole be dependent, there must be something on which it depends; and that something must be prior in time to that which depends on it; which is impossible, if that which is dependent be from eternity. It follows, that there must be an eternal and independent Being, on whom all other things depend.

Some Atheists seem to acknowledge a first cause, when they ascribe the origin of the universe to *chance*.

But it is not easy to guess what they mean by this word.—We call those things *accidental*, *casual*, or the *effects* of *chance*, with whose immediate causes we are unacquainted; as the changes of the weather, for example; which, however, every body believes to be owing to some adequate cause, though we cannot find it out. Sometimes, when an intelligent being does a thing without design, as when a man, throwing a stone out of his field, happens to strike a man whom he did not see, it is called *accidental*. In affirming that the universe proceeds from chance, it would appear, that Atheists mean, either that it has

no cause at all, or that its cause did not act intelligently, or with design, in the production of it. That the universe proceeds from no cause, we have seen to be absurd. And therefore, we shall overturn all the atheistical notions concerning chance, if we can show, what indeed is easily shown, and of what no considerate person can be ignorant, that the Cause of the universe is intelligent and wise; and in creating it, must have acted with intelligence and wisdom.

Wherever we find a number of things complete in their structure, and yet perfectly similar, we believe them to be the work of design. Were a man to find a thousand pair of shoes, of the same shape, size, and materials, it would not be easy to persuade him that the whole was chance-work. Now the instances of complex and similar productions in nature, are so very numerous as to exceed computation. All human bodies, for example, though each of them consists of almost an infinite number of parts, are perfectly uniform in their structure and functions: and the same thing may be said of all the animals and plants of any particular species. To suppose this the effect of undesigning chance, or the productions of an unintelligent cause, is as great an absurdity as it is possible to imagine.

Further: a composition of parts mutually adapted, we must always consider as the work of design; especially if it be found in a great variety of instances. Suppose a body, (an equilateral prism, for example,) to be formed by chance; and suppose a certain quantity of matter accidentally determined to resolve itself into tubes of a certain dimension. It is as infinite to one, that these tubes should have orifices equal to the base of the prism; there being an infinity of other magnitudes equally possible. Suppose the orifices equal, it is as infinite to one, that any of the tubes should be prismatical; infinite other figures being equally possible. Suppose one of them prismatical, there is, for the same reason, an infinity of chances that it shall not be equilateral. Suppose it to be equilateral, there are still infinite chances that the tube and prism shall never meet. Suppose them to meet, there are innumerable chances that their axes shall not be in the same direction. Suppose them to have the same direction, there are still many chances that the angles of the prism shall not coincide with those of the tube: and supposing them to coincide, there are innumerable chances that no force shall be applied in such a direction, as to make the prism enter the tube.

How many millions of chances, then, are there against the *casual* formation of one prism inserted in the prismatic tube! which yet a small degree of design could easily accomplish. Were we to find, in a solitary place, a composition of this kind, of which the tube was iron, and the prism of wood, it would not be easy for us to believe, that such a thing was the work of

chance. And if so small a thing cannot be without design, what shall we say of the mechanism of a plant, an animal—a system of plants and animals—a world—a system of worlds—an universe! No person who has any pretensions to rationality, and is not determined to shut his eyes against the truth, will ever bring himself to believe, that works so stupendous could be the effect of undesigning chance.

To set this argument in a proper light, it would be necessary to take a survey of the works of nature; in which the vast number of systems, the artful union of parts, the nice proportions established between every part and system and its respective end, the innumerable multitudes of species, and the infinite numbers of forms in every species, are so conspicuous as to prove, beyond all doubt, that the Creator of the world is infinitely wise, powerful, and good. Let a man examine only a grain of corn, by cutting it open, and viewing it with a microscope; and then let him consider another grain as placed in the earth, and by the influence of heat, soil, air and moisture, springing up into a plant, consisting of a great number of vessels that disperse the vital sap into every part, and endowed with the power, or susceptibility, of growing in bulk, till in due time it produce a number of other grains of the same kind, necessary to the existence of man and other creatures: let a rational being attend to this fact, and compare it with the noblest efforts of human art, and if he be not struck with the infinite superiority of the one to the other, what can we say of him, but that he is void of understanding? And yet the mechanism and growth of a vegetable seems an inconsiderable thing, when we think of the wisdom and power displayed in many other works of nature.

What a fabric is our solar system! wherein bodies of such enormous magnitude accomplish their revolutions through spaces immense, and with a regularity than which nothing can be more perfect. The distance of the planets from the sun, and their several magnitudes, are determined with the utmost wisdom, and according to the nicest geometrical proportion. The central orb, whether we consider its glorious appearance, its astonishing greatness, or the beneficial influence of its light and heat, is such an object as no rational being can contemplate without adoring the Creator. We have good reason to believe, that there are thousands of other suns and systems of worlds, more glorious, perhaps, and more extensive than ours; which form such a stupenduous whole, that the human soul, labouring to comprehend it, loses sight of itself and of all sublunary things, and is totally overwhelmed with astonishment and admiration. With such thoughts in our view, we are apt to forget the wonders that lie immediately around us, and that the smallest planet or animal body amounts to a demonstration of the Divine Existence. But God appears in all his works, in the least, as

well as in the greatest; and there is not, in the whole circle of human sciences, any one truth confirmed by so many irresistible proofs, as the existence of the Deity.

The diurnal motion of the planets is the easiest way possible of exposing all their parts to the influence of light and heat. Their globular form is the fittest for motion; and for the free circulation of the atmosphere around them; and at the same time supplies the most capacious surface. The principle of gravitation, prevailing throughout the whole system, and producing innumerable phenomona, is a most amazing instance of unbounded variety united with the strictest uniformity and proportion. But it is impossible in a few pages to give such an enumeration of particulars, as would do any justice to the subject. The man, who should suppose a large city, consisting of a hundred thousand palaces—all finished in the minutest parts, and furnished with the greatest elegance and variety of ornament, and with all sorts of books, pictures, and statues, executed in the most ingenious manner—to have been produced by the accidental blowing of winds and rolling of sands, would justly be accounted irrational. But to suppose the universe, or our solar system, or this earth, to be the work of undesigning chance, is an absurdity incomparably greater.

And now, from a particular survey of the terraqueous globe; of the atmosphere, so necessary to light and life and vegetation; of the different productions of different countries, so well adapted to the constitution and use of the inhabitants—from the variety of useful minerals to be found in all parts of the earth—from the wonderful mechanism and still more wonderful growth of vegetables, their vast number and variety, their beauty and utility, and the great abundance of such as are most useful, particularly grass and corn—from the structure, life, motion, and instincts of animals—from the exact correspondence of their instincts to their necessities—from the different kinds of them, and of vegetables, having been so long preserved—from the similitude between all the individuals of each species—from the body and soul of man, so replete with wonders—from his intellectual and moral faculties—and from innumerable other particulars that come under the cognizance of man—we might proceed to set the Divine Existence in a still clearer light, if that were necessary: but the subject is so copious, that we cannot enter upon it. We should injure it by a brief summary; and a full detail would comprehend astronomy, geography, natural history, natural philosophy, and several other sciences. I therefore refer you to what has been written on it, by Xenophon, in the fourth chapter of his first book of *Memorabilia;* by Cicero, in his second book *de Natura Deorum;* by Durham, Ray, Fenelon, Niewentyt; by Clark, Bentley, Abernethy, &c. in their sermons; and by other ingenious authors.

Some have urged, that there are in the universe many marks of irregularity and want of design, as well as regularity and wisdom; and that therefore we have no evidence that the Being who made all things, is perfectly good and wise. But though we were to admit the fact, the inference would not be fair. The wonderful contrivance which appears in the arrangement of the solar system, or even in the human body, abundantly proves the Creator to be infinitely wise. That he has not thought fit to make all things equally beautiful and excellent, can never be an imputation on his wisdom and goodness: for how absurd would it be to say, that he would have displayed more wisdom, if he had endowed all things with life, perception and reason! Stones and plants, air and water, are most useful things, and would have been much less useful, if they had been percipient beings; as the inferior animals would have been both less useful and less happy, if they had been rational. Their existence, therefore, and their natures, are proofs of the divine goodness and wisdom, instead of being arguments against either.

Besides, no man of sense accounts himself a complete judge of any work, even of a fellow-creature, unless he understand its end and structure as well as the workman himself does. When we wish to know with certainty the value of a ship, or a house, or any implex machine, we consult those who are skilled in such things; for them only we hold to be competent judges. In a complex contrivance there may be many parts, of the greatest importance, of which an unskilful observer would not perceive the use, or would perhaps declare to be useless. Now, in the course of Providence, a vast number of events and objects may be employed to accomplish one great end: and it is impossible for us to pronounce reasonably of any one event or object, that it is useless and improper, unless we know its tendency, and connexion with other things, both past and future; which, in cases innumerable, we cannot do. For of the past we know but little; the present we know imperfectly; and of the future we have no certain knowledge beyond what is revealed. The system of Providence, relating to us and to our final destination, extends through thousands of years, as we have good reason to believe: but our life is short, and our views are bounded by our experience, which is very limited. That, therefore, may be a most wise and beneficent dispensation, which, to a captious mind and fallible judgment, may appear the contrary.

Moreover, the Deity intended, that the nature of all created things should be progressive. Many years pass away before a man arrives at maturity; and many days before a plant can yield good fruit. Every thing is imperfect while advancing towards perfection: and we cannot say of any thing, whether it

be well or ill contrived for answering its end, till we know what its state of maturity will be, and what the effects are, whereof it may be productive. Physical evils may, as will be shown by and by, be improved into blessings: and it will also be shown, that moral evil is a consequence of that law of nature, which makes us capable of virtue and happiness. Even in this world, Providence often brings good out of evil: and every man of observation must have perceived, that certain events of his life, which, when they happened, seemed to be great misfortunes, have been found to be great blessings in the end.

If, then, that which seems evil may really be good, for any thing we know to the contrary—and if that which is really evil, often does, and always may produce good—how can man be so presumptuous as to suppose, because he cannot distinctly see the nature and use of some things around him, that therefore the Creator of the world is not supremely good and wise? No man can draw the conclusion, unless he believe himself infallible in his knowledge of all things past, present, and future: and he who believes so, if there be any such, is a fool.

BEATTIE.

[*To be continued.*]

LECTURES ON THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.

LECTURE I.

A compendious View of the Sacred Writings.

[Concluded from page 10.]

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES continue the history of our religion after our Lord's ascension; the astonishing and rapid propagation of it by a few illiterate tent-makers and fishermen, through almost every part of the world, "by demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" without the aid of eloquence or of force, and in opposition to all the authority, all the power, and all the influence of the opulent and the great.

The EPISTLES, that is, the letters addressed by the Apostles and their associates to different churches and to particular individuals, contain many admirable rules and directions to the primitive converts; many affecting exhortations, expostulations, and reproofs; many explanations and illustrations of the doctrines delivered by our Lord; together with constant references to facts, circumstances, and events, recorded in the Gospels and the Acts; in which we perceive such striking, yet evidently such unpremeditated and undesigned coincidences and agreements between the narratives and the epistles, as form one most conclusive argument for the truth, authenticity, and genuineness of both.*

* See the Horæ Paulinæ of Dr. Paley.

The sacred volume concludes with the Revelation of St. John, which, under the form of visions and various symbolical representations, presents to us a prophetic history of the Christian religion in future times, and the various changes, vicissitudes, and revolutions, it was to undergo in different ages and countries, to the end of the world.*

Is it possible now to conceive a nobler, a more comprehensive, a more useful scheme of instruction than this; in which the uniformity and variety, so happily blended together, give it an inexpressible beauty, and the whole composition plainly proves its Author to be divine?

"The Bible is not indeed (as a great writer observes†) a plan of religion delineated with minute accuracy, to instruct men as in something altogether new, or to excite a vain admiration and applause; but it is somewhat unspeakably more great and noble, comprehending (as we have seen) in the grandest and most magnificent order, along with every essential of that plan, the various dispensations of GOD to mankind, from the formation of this earth, to the consummation of all things. *Other* books may afford us much entertainment and much instruction; may gratify our curiosity, may delight our imagination, may improve our understandings, may calm our passions, may exalt our sentiments, may even improve our hearts. But they have not, they cannot have, that authority in what they affirm, in what they require, in what they promise and threaten, that the Scriptures have. There is a peculiar weight and energy in *them*, which is not to be found in any other writings. Their denunciations are more awful, their convictions stronger, their consolations more powerful, their counsels more authentic, their warnings more alarming, their expostulations more penetrating. There are passages in them throughout so sublime, so pathetic, full of such energy and force upon the heart and conscience, yet without the least appearance of labour and study for that purpose; indeed, the design of the whole is so noble, so well suited to the sad condition of human kind; the morals have in them such purity and dignity; the doctrines, so many of them above reason, yet so perfectly reconcileable with it; the expression is so majestic, yet familiarized with such easy simplicity; that the more we read and study these writings with pious dispositions and judicious attention, the more we shall

* A fuller and more detailed account of the contents of the several Books of Scripture, may be found in Mr. Gray's *Key to the Old Testament*, Bp. Percy's *to the New*, and the Bishop of Lincoln's late excellent work on the *Elements of Christian Theology*. That part of it which relates to the Scriptures, has been lately reprinted for the accommodation of the public at large, in a duodecimo volume, which I particularly recommend to the attention of my readers.

† Archbishop Secker, V. 6.

see and feel the hand of GOD in them."* But that which stamps upon them the highest value, that which renders them, strictly speaking, *inestimable*, and distinguishes them from all other books in the world, is this, that they, and they only, "*contain the words of eternal life.*"† In this respect, every other book, even the noblest compositions of man, must fail us: they cannot give us that which we most want, and what is of infinitely more importance to us than all other things put together, ETERNAL LIFE.

This we must look for no where but in Scripture. It is there, and there only, that we are informed from authority, of the immortality of the soul, of a general resurrection from the dead, of a future judgment, of a state of eternal happiness to the good, and of eternal misery to the bad. It is there we are made acquainted with the fall of our first parents from a state of innocence and happiness; with the guilt, corruption, and misery, which this sad event brought on all their posterity; which, together with their own personal and voluntary transgressions, rendered them obnoxious to GOD's severest punishments. But, to our inexpressible comfort, we are further told, in this divine book, that GOD is full of mercy, compassion, and goodness; that he is not extreme to mark what is done amiss; that he willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness, and save his soul alive. In pity, therefore, to mankind, he was pleased to provide a remedy for their dreadful state. He was pleased to adopt a measure which should at once satisfy his justice, show his extreme abhorrence of sin, make a sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, and release all who accepted the terms proposed to them, from the punishment they had deserved. This was nothing less than the death of his son Jesus Christ, whom he sent into the world to take our nature upon him, to teach us a most holy, pure, and

* That accomplished scholar and distinguished writer, the late Sir William Jones, chief justice of Bengal, at the end of his Bible wrote the following note; which, coming from a man of his profound erudition, and perfect knowledge of the oriental languages, customs, and manners, must be considered a most powerful testimony not only to the sublimity, but to the divine inspiration of the sacred writings.

"I have (says he) regularly and attentively read these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed.

"The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance, in form or style, to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Persian, or even Arabian learning. The antiquity of these compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief that they are genuine predictions, and consequently inspired."

† John vi. 68.

benevolent religion, to reform us both by his precepts and examples; and lastly, to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification. By him, and his evangelists and apostles, we are assured, that if we sincerely repent of our sins, and firmly believe in him and his Gospel, we shall, for the sake of his sufferings and his righteousness, have all our transgressions forgiven and blotted out; shall be *justified*, that is, considered as innocent in the sight of GOD; shall have the assistance of his Holy Spirit for our future conduct; and, if we persevere to the end in a uniform (though, from the infirmity of our nature, imperfect) obedience to all the laws of Christ, shall, through his merits, be rewarded with everlasting glory in the life to come.

Since, then, the utility, the absolute necessity of reading the Scriptures, is so great; since they are not only the best guide you can consult, but the only one that can possibly lead you to heaven; it becomes the indispensable duty of every one of you most carefully and constantly to peruse these sacred oracles, that you may thereby "become perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work."* They who have much leisure should employ a considerable share of it in this holy exercise; and even they who are most immersed in business, have, or ought to have, the Lord's day entirely to spare, and should always employ some part of it (more particularly at this holy season) in reading and meditating on the word of GOD. By persevering steadily in this practice, any one may, in no great length of time, read the Scriptures through, from one end to the other. But in doing this, it would be advisable to begin with the New Testament first, and to read it over most frequently, because it concerns us Christians the most nearly, and explains to us more fully and more clearly the words of eternal life. But after you have once gone regularly through both the Old Testament and the New, it may then be most useful, perhaps, to select out of each such passages as lay before you the great fundamental doctrines, and most essential duties, of your Christian profession; and even among these, to dwell the longest on such as express these things in the most awful and striking manner, such as affect and touch you most powerfully, such as make your heart burn within you, and stir up all the pious affections in your soul. But it will be of little use to *read*, unless at the same time also you *reflect*; unless you apply what you read to those great purposes which the Scriptures were meant to promote, the amendment of your faults, the improvement of your hearts, and the salvation of your souls.

To assist you in this most important and necessary work, is the design of these Lectures; and in the execution of this design, I shall have these four objects principally in view:

* 2 Tim. iii. 17.

First, to explain and illustrate those passages of holy writ, which are in any degree difficult and obscure.

2dly. To point out, as they occur in the sacred writings, the chief leading fundamental principles and doctrines of the Christian religion.

3dly. To confirm and strengthen your faith, by calling your attention to those strong internal marks of the truth and divine authority of the Christian religion, which present themselves to us in almost every page of the Gospel.

4thly. To lay before you the great moral precepts of the Gospel, to press them home upon your consciences and your hearts, and render them effectual to the important ends they were intended to serve; namely, the due government of your passions, the regulation of your conduct, and the attainment of everlasting life.

These are all of them objects of the very last importance: they are worthy the attention of every human being; and they will, I think, be better attained by a familiar and practical explanation of the sacred writings, than by any other species of composition whatever.

The plan of instruction adopted by our blessed Lord was unquestionably the very best that could be devised. It was not a regular system of ethics, delivered in a connected series of dry essays and dissertations, like those of the ancient heathen philosophers; but it consisted of familiar discourses, interesting parables, short sententious maxims, and occasional reflections, arising from the common occurrences of life, and the most obvious appearances of nature. All these various modes of instruction are so judiciously blended and mixed together in the history of our Lord's life and conversation, delivered to us in the Gospel, (as all the various sorts of pleasing objects are in the unornamented scenes of nature,) that they make a much deeper impression both on the understanding and on the heart, than they could possibly do in any other more artificial form.

An exposition of Scripture, then, must at all times be highly useful and interesting to every sincere disciple of Christ; but must be peculiarly so at the present moment, when so much pains have been taken to ridicule and revile the sacred writings, to subvert the very foundations of our faith, and to poison the minds of all ranks of people, but especially the middling and the lower classes, by the most impious and blasphemous publications that ever disgraced any Christian country.* To resist these wicked attempts, is the duty of every minister of the Gospel; and as I have strongly exhorted all those who are under my superintendence, to exert themselves with zeal and

* About this time, and some years before, *The Age of Reason*, and other pestilent writings of the same nature were disseminated through almost every district of this country with incredible industry.

vigour in defence of their insulted religion, I think it incumbent on me to take my share in this important contest, and to show that I wish not to throw burdens on others, of which I am not willing to bear my full proportion. As long, therefore, as my health, and the various duties of an extensive and populous diocese, will permit, and the exigencies of the times require such exertions, I propose to continue annually these Lectures. And I shall think it no unbecoming conclusion of my life, if these labours of my declining years should tend in any degree to render the Holy Scriptures more clear and intelligible, more useful and delightful; if they shall confirm the faith, reform the manners, console and revive the hearts of those who hear me; and vindicate the honour of our divine Master from those gross indignities and insults, which have of late been so indecently and impiously thrown on him and his religion.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

[*Continued from page* 13.]

ONE of the most celebrated works of this species of history, is that of the late learned Rev. J. L. MOSHEIM, and Chancellor of the University of Gottingen. It was a Latin composition, but has been translated from the original into English, by the Rev. A. Maclaine, D. D. and is comprised in six volumes octavo. It is generally considered as the most valuable work of the kind yet extant in this country; and is highly recommended in Europe and America, by eminent DIVINES, both of the Episcopal and Presbyterian denominations; though Episcopal orders have exceptions against it, so far as it is supposed to vary from the primitive principles and practice of the church, with respect to order, government, &c. As, however, it is difficult to find any one author against whom there may not be some exceptions, we finally conclude to copy, from the work in question, the Ecclesiastical History designed for this Magazine. Most of it, however, must be considerably abridged, and, in some instances, the manner of expressions varied.

The following extract from the Translator's Preface, will tend to establish what is said above of the character of the work:

"I cannot persuade myself, that the complaints we hear frequently of the frivolous nature of the public taste in matters of literature, are so far to be relied on, as to make me despair of a favourable reception of the following work. A History of the Christian Church, composed with judgment, taste, and candour, drawn with uncommon discernment and industry from the best sources, enriched with much useful learning and several important discoveries, and connected with the History of

Arts, Philosophy, and Civil Government, is an object which will very probably attract the attention of many, and must undoubtedly excite the curiosity of the judicious and the wise. A work of this nature will be considered by the *Philosopher* as an important branch of the History of the Human Mind; and I need not mention a multitude of reasons which render it peculiarly interesting to the *Christian*. Besides, there has not hitherto appeared in English, any complete History of the Church, that represents its revolutions, its divisions, and doctrines, with impartiality and truth; exposes the delusions of popish legends; breathes a spirit of moderation and freedom; and, keeping perpetually in view of the reader the true nature and design of the Christian religion, points out the deviations from its beautiful simplicity, that have been too frequent among all orders of men in all ages of the world.

"The following work has the best claim, of any I know, to these characters;* and its peculiar merit is pointed out, as far as modesty would permit, in the ensuing Preface of its justly celebrated author. The reputation of this great man is very well known. His noble birth seemed to open to his ambition a fair path to civil promotion; but his zeal for the interests of religion, his insatiable thirst after knowledge, and, more especially, his predominant taste for sacred literature, induced him to consecrate his admirable talents to the service of the church. The German universities conferred on him numerous literary honours. The king of Denmark invited him to settle at *Copenhagen*. The duke of Brunswick called him from thence to *Helenstadt*, where he received the marks of distinction due to his eminent abilities; filled, with applause, the academical chair of divinity; was honoured with the character of ecclesiastical counsellor to that respectable court; and presided over the seminaries of learning in the duchy of *Wolfembuttle* and the principality of *Blackenburg*. When the late king formed the design of giving an uncommon degree of lustre to the university of *Gottingen*, by filling it with men of the first rank in the literary world, such as a HALLER, a GESNER, and a MICHAELIS, Dr. Mosheim was deemed worthy to appear at the head of that seat of learning, in the quality of chancellor; and here he died, universally lamented, in the year 1755, and in the sixty-first year of his age. In depth of judgment; in extent of learning; in the powers of a noble, a masculine eloquence; in purity of taste; and in a laborious application to all the various branches of erudition and philosophy; he had cer-

* Some time after I had undertaken this translation, I was honoured with a letter from the learned bishop of Gloucester, in which he was so good as to testify his approbation of my design, and to speak of the work I here offer to the public in an English dress, in the following manner: MOSHEIM's *Compendium is excellent; the method admirable; in short, the only one deserving the name of an Ecclesiastical History. It deserves, and needs, frequent notes.*

tainly very few superiors. His Latin translation of the celebrated Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe*, enriched with large annotations, discovered such a profound acquaintance with ancient philosophy and erudition, as justly excited the admiration of the learned world. His ingenious illustrations of the sacred writings; his successful labours in the defence of Christianity, and the light he cast upon the history of religion and philosophy, by his uninterrupted researches, appear in a multitude of volumes, which are deservedly placed among the most valuable treasures of sacred and profane literature; and the learned and judicious work, that is here presented to the public, will undoubtedly render his name illustrious in the records of religion and letters."

The following extract from the author's Preface will show the zeal and fidelity with which he appears to have engaged in the arduous undertaking:

"My principal care," says our author, "has been employed in establishing, upon the most solid foundations, and confirming by the most respectable authority, the credit of the facts related in this History. For this purpose, I have drawn from the fountain head, and have gone to those genuine sources from which the pure and uncorrupted streams of evidence flow. I have consulted the best authors of every age, and chiefly those who were contemporary with the events they relate, or lived near the periods in which they happened; and I have endeavoured to report their contents with brevity, perspicuity, and precision. Abbreviations, generally speaking, do little more than reduce to a short and narrow compass, those large bodies of history, that have been compiled from original authors: this method may be, in some measure, justified by several reasons, and therefore is not to be entirely disapproved. Hence nevertheless it happens, that the errors, which almost always abound in large voluminous productions, are propagated with facility, and, passing from one book to many, are unhappily handed down from age to age. This I had formerly observed in several abridgments; and I had lately the mortification to find some instances of this in my own work,* when I examined it by the pure lamp of antiquity, and compared it with those original records which are considered as the genuine sources of sacred history. It was then, that I perceived the danger of confiding implicitly even in those who are the most generally esteemed on account of their fidelity, penetration, and diligence; and it was then also, that I became sensible of the necessity of adding, suppressing, changing, and correcting several things in the small work which I formerly published. In the execution of this necessary task, I can affirm with truth, that I

* The author here alludes to his *Elements of Christian History*, published some time previous to this.

have not been wanting in perseverance, industry, or attention; and yet, with all these, it is extremely difficult to avoid mistakes of every kind, as those who are acquainted with the nature of historical researches abundantly know. How far I have approached to that inaccessible degree of exactness, which is chargeable with no error, must be left to the decision of those whose extensive knowledge of the Christian history entitles them to pronounce judgment in this matter. That such may judge with more facility, I have mentioned the authors who have been my guides; and, if I have in any respect misrepresented their accounts or their sentiments, I must confess, that I am much more inexcusable than some other historians, who have met and deserved the same reproach; since I have perused with attention, and compared with each other, the various authors to whose testimony I appeal; having formed a resolution of trusting to no authority inferior to that of the original sources of historical truth."

We now proceed to the INTRODUCTION, and thence to the main body of the work.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY is a clear and faithful narration of the acts and events relating to the CHURCH of CHRIST, or that large community known by the name of CHRISTIANS. It comprehends both the *external* and *internal* condition of this community, and so connects each event with the causes from which it proceeds, and the instruments concerned in its production, that the attentive reader may observe the displays of providential wisdom and goodness in the preservation of the church, and then find his piety improved, as well as his knowledge.

The church, founded by the ministry and death of CHRIST, cannot be represented with more perspicuity and propriety than under the notion of a society subjected to a lawful dominion, and governed by certain laws and institutions, mostly of a moral and spiritual tendency. To such a society many external events must happen, which will advance or oppose its interests, and accelerate or retard its progress towards perfection, in consequence of its unavoidable connexion with the course and revolutions of human affairs. Moreover, as nothing is stable and uniform where the imperfections of humanity take place, this religious society, besides the vicissitudes to which it must be exposed from the influence of external events, must be liable to various changes in its internal constitution. In this view of things, then, it appears, that the history of the church, like that of the state, may with propriety be divided into two general branches, which we may call its *external* and *internal* History.

The *External History* of the Church comprehends all the changes, vicissitudes, and events, which have diversified the external state and condition of this sacred community. And

as all public societies have their periods of lustre and decay, and are exposed to revolutions both of a happy and calamitous nature; so this first branch of Ecclesiastical History may be subdivided into two, comprehending respectively the prosperous and calamitous events that have happened to the church.

The prosperous events that have contributed to extend the limits, or to augment the influence of the Christian Church, have proceeded either from its rulers and leaders, or from the subordinate members of this great community. Under the former class, we rank its *public* rulers, such as princes, magistrates, and pontiffs, who, by their authority and laws, their liberality, and even their arms, have maintained its cause and extended its borders; and also its more private leaders, its learned and pious doctors, whose wise counsels, pious exploits, eminent examples, and distinguished abilities, have contributed most to promote its *true* prosperity and lustre. Under the latter class, we may comprehend the advantages which the cause of Christianity has derived from the active faith, the invincible constancy, the fervent piety, and extensive charity, of its genuine professors, who, by the attractive lustre of these amiable virtues, have led many into the way of truth, and engaged them to submit themselves to the empire of the MESSIAH.

Under the *calamitous* events which have happened to the church, may be comprehended the injuries it has received from the vices and passions of its friends, and the bitter opposition and insidious stratagems of its enemies. The professors of Christianity, more especially the doctors and rulers of the church, have done unspeakable detriment to the cause of religion, by their ignorance and sloth, their luxury and ambition, their uncharitable zeal, animosities and contentions, of which many shocking examples will be exhibited in the course of this history. Christianity had *public* enemies to encounter, even princes and magistrates, who opposed its progress by penal laws and bloodthirsty persecution. It had also private and inveterate adversaries, in a certain set of philosophers, or rather sophists, who, enslaved to superstition, or abandoned to atheism, endeavoured to blast the rising church by their perfidious accusations and virulent writings.

Such then are the events exhibited in the external history of the church. Its *Internal History* comprehends the changes and vicissitudes which have happened in its inward constitution, in that system of discipline and doctrine by which it stands distinguished from all other religious societies. This branch may be properly termed the *History of the Christian Religion.* The causes of these internal changes are to be sought for principally in the conduct and measures of those who have presided and borne rule in the church. It has been too frequently their practice to interpret the truths and precepts of religion in a manner

accommodated to their particular systems, nay, to their private interest; and, while they have found in some implicit obedience, they have met with warm opposition from others. Hence have proceeded theological broils and civil commotions, in which the cause of religion has often been defended at the expense both of justice and humanity. All these things must be observed with the strictest attention by an ecclesiastical historian.

The first thing, therefore, that should be naturally treated in the *internal history* of the church, is the history of its ministers, rulers, and form of government. When we look back to the commencement of the Christian church, we find its government administered jointly by the pastors and the people. But, in process of time, the scene changes, and we see these pastors affecting an air of pre-eminence and superiority, trampling upon the rights and privileges of the community, and assuming to themselves a supreme authority, both in civil and religious matters. This invasion of the rights of the people was at length carried to such a height, that a single man administered, or at least pretended a right to administer, the affairs of the whole church, with an unlimited sway. Among the doctors of these early times, there were some* who acquired, by their learned labours, a shining reputation and an universal influence: they were regarded as oracles: their decisions were handed down to posterity, as sacred rules of faith and practice; and they thus deserve to be mentioned, with particular distinction.

After giving an account of the rulers and doctrines of the church, the ecclesiastical historian proceeds to exhibit a view of the *laws* peculiar to this sacred community. These *laws* are of two kinds. The first are properly called divine, because immediately enacted by GOD himself, and contained in those books having the most striking marks of a divine origin. They consist of those *doctrines* which are the objects of faith and reason, and those precepts addressed to the heart and affections. To the second kind belong those laws merely of human institution, and deriving their authority only from the rulers of the church.

In that part of the sacred history which relates the doctrines of Christianity, it is necessary to inquire into the degree of authority attributed to the sacred writings in the different periods of the church, and also into the manner in which the scriptures have been explained and illustrated. For the true state of religion in every age can be learned only from the point of view in which these celestial oracles were considered, and from the manner in which they were expounded. As long as they formed the only rule of faith, religion preserved its native purity; but in proportion as they were disregarded, or superseded by

* The *Fathers.*

the inventions of men, it degenerated from its primitive simplicity. It is further necessary to show, under this head, what was the fate of the pure laws and doctrines of Christianity; how they were interpreted and explained; how they were defended against the enemies of the Gospel; how they were corrupted and adulterated by the ignorance and licentiousness of men. And finally, it will be proper to inquire here, how far the lives and manners of Christians have been conformable to the dictates of these sacred laws, and the influence these sublime doctrines ought to have on the hearts of men; as also to examine the rules of discipline prescribed by the spiritual governors of the church, in order to correct and restrain the vices and irregularities of its members.

The *Human Laws*, that constitute a part of ecclesiastical government, consist in precepts concerning the external worship of Deity, and in certain rites, either confirmed by custom, or introduced by authority. *Rites* and *ceremonies* regard religion either *directly* or *indirectly*: by the former we understand those used in the immediate worship of the Supreme Being, whether public or private: by the latter, such pious and decent institutions, as, besides direct acts of worship, have obtained in the church.

As bodies politic are sometimes distracted with wars and seditions; so has the Christian church, though designed to be the mansion of charity and concord, been unhappily perplexed by internal divisions; occasioned sometimes by points of doctrine; at others, by a variety of sentiments respecting certain rites and ceremonies. The authors of these divisions have been called *Heretics;* and their peculiar opinions, *Heresies.* The nature and progress of these intestine divisions are to be carefully unfolded; and if this be done with judgment and impartiality, it must prove useful and interesting in the highest degree; though no branch of ecclesiastical history is so painful and difficult, on account of the sagacity, candour, and application it requires, to treat it in a satisfactory manner.

The difficulty of arriving at the truth, in researches of this nature, is enhanced by the injudicious treatment shown the heads of religious sects, and the unfair representations given their tenets and opinions; and also by reason of the greatest part of the writings of those branded by the name of heretics not having reached our times. It is therefore the duty of a candid historian, to avoid attaching to this term the invidious sense in which it is too often used; since it is the invective of all contending parties, and is employed against truth as frequently as against error. The wisest method here, is to take the word *Heretic* in its general signification, as denoting a person, who, either directly or indirectly, has been the cause of exciting divisions and dissensions among Christians.

With respect to the *manner* of treating this history, it will be requisite to trace effects to their causes, and to connect events with the circumstances which contributed to their existence. A bare recital of facts can at best but enrich the *memory*, and furnish a certain degree of amusement; but the historian, who enters into the secret springs that direct the course of outward events, and views things in their various relations, connexions, and tendencies, gives thus a proper exercise to the *judgment* of the reader; and administers, on many occasions, the most useful lessons of wisdom and prudence. It is true, a high degree of caution is to be observed here, lest, in disclosing the springs of public events, we substitute imaginary causes in the place of real, and attribute the actions of men to principles they never professed.

From this we shall discern the qualifications essential to a good writer of Ecclesiastical History. His knowledge of human nature and human affairs must be considerable, and his learning extensive. He must be endowed with a spirit of observation and sagacity; a habit of reasoning with evidence and facility; a faithful memory; and a judgment matured by experience and strengthened by exercise. Such are the intellectual endowments required in the character of a good historian; and the moral qualities necessary to complete it, are a persevering and inflexible attachment to truth and virtue, a freedom from the servitude and prejudice of passion, and a laborious and patient turn of mind.

Ecclesiastical historians, as well as others, are exposed to receive a bias from three different sources, *times*, *persons*, and *opinions*. The *times* in which we live, have often so great an influence on our manner of judging, as to make us consider the events, happening in our days, as a rule by which to estimate the probability or evidence of those recorded in the history of past ages. The *persons*, whose testimonies we esteem, acquire an imperceptible authority over our sentiments, which seduces us to adopt their errors, especially if their persons have been distinguished for sanctity and virtue. And an attachment to favourite *opinions* leads authors sometimes to pervert, or at least to modify, facts, in favour of those who have embraced these opinions, or to the disadvantage of such as have opposed them. These kinds of seduction are the more dangerous; as those deceived by them are often insensible of the delusion. It is unnecessary to observe the solemn obligations which bind an historian to guard against these sources of error with delicate circumspection and scrupulous attention.

The historians, however, are few, whom neither the influence of the sect to which they belong, nor the venerable and imposing names of antiquity, nor the spirit of the times and the torrent of prevailing *opinion*, can turn aside from the obstinate

pursuit *alone.* The spirit of the times, and the influence of predominant opinions, have gained, with many, an incredible ascendent. Hence we find frequently, in the writings even of learned men, such wretched arguments as these: *Such an opinion is true; therefore it must of necessity have been adopted by the primitive Christians. Christ has commanded us to live in such a manner; therefore it is undoubtedly certain, that the Christians of ancient times lived so. A certain custom does not take place now; therefore it did not prevail in former times.*

The labours of faithful historians are eminently useful to mankind. The history of the church presents to our view a variety of objects every way adapted to confirm our faith. When we contemplate here, the discouraging obstacles, the united efforts of kingdoms and empires, and the terrible calamities which Christianity, in its very infancy, was obliged to encounter, and over which it gained an immortal victory; this will be sufficient to fortify its true and zealous professors against all the threats, cavils and stratagems of profane and impious men. The great and shining examples also, which display their lustre, more or less, in every period of Christian history, must have an admirable tendency to inflame our piety, and to excite, even in the coldest and most insensible hearts, the love of GOD and virtue. Those amazing revolutions and events which distinguished every age of the church, and often seemed to arise from small beginnings, or causes of little consequence, proclaim, with a solemn and respectable voice, the empire of Providence, and also the inconstancy and vanity of human things. And among the many advantages arising from the study of Ecclesiastical History, it is none of the least, that we shall see therein the origin and occasions of those ridiculous rites, absurd opinions, foolish superstitions, and pernicious errors, with which Christianity is yet disfigured in too many parts of the world. This knowledge will naturally lead us to a view of the truth in its beautiful simplicity, will engage us to love it, and render us zealous in its defence; not to mention the pleasure and satisfaction we must feel in researches and discoveries of such an interesting kind.

Instructors of youth, and those set apart for the service of the church, will derive from this study the most useful lessons of wisdom and prudence, to direct them in the discharge of their respective offices. On the one hand, the inconsiderate zeal and temerity of others, and the pernicious consequences with which they have been attended, will teach circumspection; and in the mistakes into which even men of eminent merit and abilities have fallen, they will often see the things they are obliged to avoid, and the sacrifices it will be prudent to make, in order to maintain peace and concord in the church: On the other, illustrious examples and salutary measures will hold forth to them a rule of conduct, a lamp to show them the paths they must pur-

sue. Great advantages may also be derived from the study of this history, by those who have turned their views to other sciences than that of theology.

Besides the usual division into centuries, the following History is divided into FOUR BOOKS, comprehending four remarkable periods. The FIRST will exhibit the state and vicissitudes of the Christian Church, from its commencement to the time of CONSTANTINE the Great. The SECOND will comprehend the period from the time of CONSTANTINE to that of CHARLEMAGNE, which produced such a remarkable change in the face of Europe. The THIRD will contain the History of the Church from the time of CHARLEMAGNE to the memorable period when LUTHER arose in *Germany*, to oppose the tyranny of *Rome*, and to deliver divine truth from the darkness that covered it. And the FOURTH, will carry down the same history, from the rise of LUTHER to the present time.

[*To be continued.*]

AN ADDRESS,

Delivered to the Candidates for the Baccalaureate, in Union College, at the Anniversary Commencement, May 1, 1805; *by* ELIPHALET NOTT, *President of that University.*

[Concluded from page 20.]

THE question is not, then, whether you will embrace religion? Relgion you *must* embrace—but whether you will embrace revealed religion, or that of erring and blind philosophy. And with respect to this question, can you hesitate?

The former has infinitely more to recommend it, than the latter. It originated in heaven. It is founded, not on conjecture, but on fact. Divinity manifested itself in the person, and shone in the life of its Author. True, he appeared in great humility; but though the humility in which he appeared had been greater than it was, either the sublimity of his doctrines, or the splendour of his actions, had been sufficient to evince his Messiahship, and prove that he was the SAVIOUR of the World. He spoke as man never spoke! Whence did he derive wisdom so transcendent? From reason? No; reason could not give it, for it had it not to give. What reason could never teach, the Gospel teaches: that in the vast and perfect government of the universe, vicarious sufferings can be accepted; and that the dread Sovereign, who administers that government, is gracious as well as just. Nor does it rest in declaration merely—It exhibits before our eyes the altar and the victim—the LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world.

The introduction of Christianity was called the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. No terms could have been more appropriate; for through it man shared the mercy, and from it caught the spirit of the heavens. The moral gloom which shrouded the nations, receded before it. The temples of superstition and of cruelty, consecrated by its entrance, became the asylum of the wretched, and resounded with their anthems of grace.

Most benign has been the influence of Christianity; and were it cordially received, and universally submitted to, war would cease, injustice be banished, and primeval happiness revisit the earth. Every inhabitant, pleased with his situation, resigned to his lot, and full of the hopes of heaven, would pass agreeably through life, and meet death without a sigh.

Is the morality of the Gospel pre-eminently excellent? So is its object pre-eminently glorious. Philosophy confines its views to this world principally. It endeavours to satisfy man with the grovelling joys of earth, till he returns to that dust out of which he was taken. Christianity takes a nobler flight. Her course is directed towards immortality. Thither she conducts her votary, and never forsakes him, till, having introduced him into the society of angels, she fixes his eternal residence among the spirits of the just.

Philosophy can only heave a sigh, a longing sigh, after immortality. Eternity is to her an unknown vast, over which she soars on conjecture's trembling wing. Above—beneath—around—is an unfathomable void; and doubt, uncertainty, or despair, are the result of all her inquiries.

Christianity, on the other hand, having furnished all necessary information concerning life, with firm and undaunted step, crosses death's narrow isthmus, and boldly launches forth into that dread futurity which borders on it. Her path is marked with glory. The once dark, dreary region brightens as she approaches it, and benignly smiles as she passes over it. Faith follows where she advances; till reaching the summit of everlasting hills, an unknown scene, in endless varieties of loveliness and beauty, presents itself, over which the ravished eye wanders, without a cloud to dim or a limit to obstruct its sight. In the midst of this scene, rendered luminous by the glory which covers it, the city, the palace, the THRONE of GOD appears. Trees of life wave their ambrosial tops around it: rivers of salvation issue from beneath it. Before it, angels touch their harps of living melody; and saints, in sweet repose, breathe forth to the listening heavens their grateful songs. The breezes of Paradise waft the symphony, and the bending sky directs it to the earth. The redeemed of the LORD catch the distant sound, and feel a sudden rapture. 'Tis the voice of departed friendship—friendship, the loss of which they mourn upon the earth,

but which they are now assured will be restored in the heavens: from whence a voice is heard to say, "Fear not ye; death cannot injure you; the grave cannot confine you: through its chill mansion, GRACE will conduct you up to glory. We wait your arrival—Haste, therefore, come away." All this Christianity will do for you. It will do more than this: It consecrates the sepulchre, into which your bodies, already touched by death, will presently descend. There, mouldering into dust, your flesh shall rest in HOPE. Nor will the season of its humiliation last for ever. Christianity, faithful to her trust, appears for its redemption. She approaches and stands before the tomb: She stretches out her sceptre and smites the sepulchre. Its moss-grown covering rends asunder. She cries to the silent inhabitants within it—Her energizing voice echoes along the cold, damp vault of death, renovating skin and bones, and dust and putrefaction.—Corruption puts on incorruption, and mortal immortality. Her former habitation, thus refined and sublimated by the resurrection, the exulting soul re-enters, and thenceforth the measure of her joy is full. . . . . .

Here thought and language fail me. Inspiration itself describes the glories of futurity by declaring them indescribable. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which are prepared for the people of GOD. What ideas are these? How must the soul exult at the prospect, and swell with the amazing conception!

As Christianity exhibits the most enrapturing motives to the practice of virtue, so it urges the most tremendous considerations to deter from vice. She declares, solemnly and irrevocably declares, "that the wages of sin are DEATH:" and to enforce her declaration, points to the concluding scene of nature; when, amidst a departing heaven and a dissolving world, the SON of MAN shall descend, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of GOD, to be glorified in his saints, and take vengeance on his enemies!

Such is the Gospel—and here I rest my observations.——At this affecting crisis, my beloved Pupils, THIS GOSPEL I deliver you. It is the most invaluable gift; and I solemnly adjure you to preserve it inviolate for ever. To whatever part of GOD's creation you may wander, carry this with you. Consult it in prosperity; resort to it in trouble; shield yourselves with it in danger; and rest your fainting head on it in death.

More efficacious than the fabled ring of ——, it consecrates its keeper; preserves his life, and eternizes his memory. While you prize and preserve this gift, which I now entrust to you, your happiness is secure. The world may be convulsed around you, the elements dissolve, and the heavens depart; still your happiness is secure.——But should you ever, in an

hour of rashness, be tempted to cast it from you; remember, that with it you cast away SALVATION. 'Tis the last hope of sinful, dying man. This gone—all is lost! Immortality is lost—and lost also is the soul which might otherwise have inherited and enjoyed it. Under these impressions, go forth—into the world—and may GOD go with you.

Committing you to his care, and, with a heart full of paternal solicitude for your welfare, I bid you an affectionate and final FAREWELL.

OBSTACLES TO THE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

[*Continued from page* 22.]

TRULY, knowledge is an invaluable acquisition. It is the glory of DEITY, and must therefore constitute that of man. By it GOD formed the universe, and sitteth on the throne thereof, decreeing righteousness and judgment to unnumbered worlds. By it he ordains, and the celestial luminaries perform their regular courses, beaming forth light and joy to their beholders. By it he commands, and the clouds drop down dew; the lilies of the field are clothed, the fowls of the air fed, and to man comfort is administered. By knowledge, nations and individuals rise from obscure beginnings to eminence and glory. By it kings rule in the fear of the LORD, princes extend the sceptre of equity, and legislators promote the harmony and felicity of nations. By it barbarians are civilized, and the darkness of their habitations is superseded by beams of light. By knowledge generally diffused, the chains of slavery are broken asunder as scorched flax; and the throne of despotism falls before the majesty of an enlightened people as Dagon before the ark of the LORD. 'All this may be recognized, but we have not *time* to obtain it,' is resounded from every quarter. And why? because the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and vain amusement, engrosses our attention.

Wealth, we know, is the goddess to which all nations bow. Like the image of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar, for the glory of his kingdom, it appears the idol erected by Satan, for the perpetuity of his reign of darkness; and the threatening of destruction by a furnace of fire, seems less necessary to obtain than to prevent the general adoration of mankind to this their favourite god. The Christian world do not indeed *profess* idolatry. But if the object loved with all the heart, be not an idol, what is? and if to devote to it our supreme attention, be not idolatry, what can be called such? Wealth, however, sufficient for the sustenance and convenience of life, is requisite, and the pursuit of it laudable. It is only when suffered to en-

gross too much attention, that it often proves a curse instead of a blessing. It becomes peculiarly obnoxious only, when suffered to palsy the powers of the mind, and to extinguish the vital flame of patriotism and virtue, of which man is susceptible, and which requires to be duly cherished for his happiness here and for ever. But supposing interest to be the sole object of pursuit, would not even this be better promoted by the attainment than by the neglect of knowledge? Would the expense of time and money requisite for its attainment, equal the disadvantages resulting from the want of it? Let any man judge from his own experience and observation. Let him reflect on the transactions of his own life, and on those of his friends, neighbours and acquaintances; and if he have not lost the power of discernment, he cannot but perceive how manifold and how great are the losses occasioned by the want of sufficient information. How frequently do we hear people recounting the disadvantages they have experienced for the want of it, and regretting they have not spent more time for its attainment? But seldom do we hear any one lament having spent too much time for this purpose. Surely the losses and disadvantages arising from the want of sufficient information, are felt by most of us; and by most of us must be acknowledged to greatly overbalance the expense of obtaining it.

If, in an individual point of view, it appears obvious nothing is gained by devoting less time than is requisite for the acquisition of knowledge, the truth will be still more apparent on a different consideration. Nations and societies are composed of individuals. What, therefore, is for the good or evil of the former, must be also for that of the latter. Now it appears obvious, that many of the heavy calamities incident to nations and communities, arise from the want of information generally diffused among the people. Would it not require less time to obtain such information, than is lost by the evils resulting from the want of it? Many governments are very oppressive. Others, much less so, would answer the purpose, were the people sufficiently informed. The expense of obtaining information requisite for the support of mild governments, would be lighter than the burdens imposed by despotic powers. War, too, is a very heavy and a very frequent calamity. Every twenty or thirty years, its ravages are experienced by most nations. Some are involved in its horrors almost half the time, for centuries together. But suppose a nation engaged in wars not more than a fourth part of the time, and that only one half of them arose from the cause in question, does not the immense sacrifices made in these cases, outweigh all expense of acquiring knowledge? War, it must be considered, is very expensive and distressing, not only during its continuance; but when it terminates, after having profusely wasted the blood and treas-

fire of a people, it generally leaves a heavy burden on the shoulders of those who survive the conflict. And what is still more deplorable, it not unfrequently introduces a flood of vice, which descends to posterity, and poisons the whole fountain of social felicity. Surely all this must be an accumulation of trouble and expense greatly exceeding what would be requisite for the dissemination of knowledge. Now, were all nations sufficiently wise and virtuous, war might be avoided entirely. But situated as are the United States, they may, if sufficiently wise and politic, generally preserve peace, notwithstanding the unpropitious aspect of the political horizon at present. If, however, knowledge be not sufficiently disseminated, that general virtue, patriotism, and concert of public measures, so essential to the preservation of peace, cannot be expected. Where kings reign and the people are slaves, knowledge in the latter can avail little, except to render them the more sensible of their degradation and misery. But where Freedom displays her banners, and concerns of vast moment depend upon the voice of the community, the influence of every man has its due weight. Every man should therefore possess the wisdom of a legislator and the sagacity of a general. A nation, composed of such individuals, might exist in almost any part of the habitable globe, and yet, if as populous and powerful as the United States, command the respect even of an Alexander at the head of modern Rome. Again, if information be not generally diffused, a judicious choice of legislators will not be made. Corrupt streams proceed not from pure fountains; nor can a wise government emanate from an illiterate and immoral people. Besides, having no adequate restraint upon its conduct, it might roam at random in the boundless fields of ambition, avarice, and false honour. Government must have made considerable progress in corruption before it will venture to impose on a well-informed people; but when it is obvious that those who have the heat and burden of the day to bear, are uninformed and careless of legislative proceedings, they are liable to be made the dupes of imposition. Legislators may, under various pretences, plausible indeed, involve the country in war or not, as best comports with their inclinations; and this with danger of losing their honour or power, as in a variety of ways, it will be easy to impose on an ignorant and unsuspecting people. Even wise and well-disposed as government may be, adequate efficacy to its measures cannot be expected to be given by a people blind to the importance of such measures. They will not sufficiently consider that a mansion strongly fortified and defended, is far less liable to be assailed, than one entirely defenceless. Thus the want of information in the people may be the cause of war in various instances. Now the time and expense of supporting such wars, to say nothing of the loss of lives and of the

distress they would occasion, must be vastly greater than the time and expense necessary to desseminate knowledge.

Besides, how much does society suffer by the train of vices inseparable from the want of general information! We will mention one, *the undue use of ardent spirits.* This is a more general and lasting injury to this country, than Bonaparte with an hundred thousand of his best troops could possibly be. Its baneful effects are felt in every neighbourhood and in almost every family. To pass by the immense cost of obtaining this liquid fire, the injury it produces to the peace, the morals, and the interest of society, is incalculable.* Now it is possible such improvements might be made by education, as to prevent one half of the evils resulting from the use of that destructive article. If so, what a saving of time and money might not be made to the community in this respect!

Again, how much time and money are thrown away upon various unnecessary amusements and fashions! Yes, to the lasting disgrace of both sexes, be it said, vain and superfluous amusements and fashions must receive great attention, while the fundamental principles of science, religion and morality, are treated with coldness and indifference; while in fact that knowledge is neglected, on which the happiness of man and the good of society chiefly depend. In this case, how much time and money might be saved by so far cultivating the understanding, elevating the ideas, and ennobling the sentiments, as to raise the fashionable world, at least, one degree above that caprice which less ill becomes a lower order of creation. How much time too is wasted in conversation which profiteth not! The common topic of discourse is often that from which can result to mankind no permanent good, either in this world or the next. It is frequently low and frivolous in the extreme; and when it rises from this to something less degrading, it is, for the most part, foreign to the great object of our existence. Indeed, subjects not of the greatest moment too much engross the leisure hours and conversation even of those from whom it should seem the community have a right to expect a better practice and better examples. Among too many respectable people, the great drift of inquiry, at the present day, is, what new fashion has come upon the carpet? what old one is expunged? what are the best methods of acquiring wealth and pleasure, power and honour? who makes a gay or a mean appearance? who rises into opulence, or sinks into poverty? who ascends the summit of fame, or falls into obscurity?

* The mischiefs produced by spirits, are thus summed up by Dr. Rush. "They fill our church-yards with premature graves—they deface the image of God in the soul—they derange or destroy the intellectual powers—they fill the sheriff's docket with executions—they crowd our hospitals with patients, and our jails with criminals—they lead to places of public ignominy and punishment—and lastly, they people the regions ———; but it belongs to another profession to show their terrible consequences in the future world."

Now, was most of this time spent in inquiring, by whom and for what end was the universe formed? by whom and for what purpose were mankind created? what qualifications are indispensable to enable us to perform well our part on this first stage of our existence? what is to be our condition centuries hence? "what causes have created and overthrown empires? what are the principles of national prosperity and misfortune? what the maxims on which the peace of society and the happiness of man ought to be founded?" were these, and others of the like nature, more the subjects of conversation, than those of less moment; how much more solid and useful information might be disseminated, and what a change for the better might be made in the present state of society!

From the preceding, and a great variety of other considerations, it might be made to appear, that would mankind rightly consult their interest, they would acquire more information; and that in this country the want of time is not so great an obstacle to the dissemination of knowledge, as the want of a due sense of its importance, and a firm determination to devote a reasonable part of our time to its attainment.

[*To be concluded in the third number.*]

ESSAYS AND THOUGHTS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS—*Selected.*

RULES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF SIGHT.

[*Concluded from page* 24.]

THE following cases, from a small tract on the "Fabric of the Eye," are so applicable to the present article, as to want no apology for their insertion here; though, if any were necessary, the use they will probably be to those whose complaints arise from the same or similar causes, would, I presume, be more than sufficient.

"A lady from the country, coming to reside in St. James' Square, was afflicted with a pain in her eye, and a decay of sight. She could not look upon the stones, when the sun shone upon them, without great pain. This, which she thought was one of the symptoms of her disorder, was the real cause of it. Her eyes, which had been accustomed to the verdure of the country, and the green of the pasture grounds before her house, could not bear the violent and unnatural glare of light reflected from the stones. She was advised to place a number of small orange-trees in the windows, so that their tops might hide the pavement, and be in a line with the grass. She recovered by this simple change in the light, without the assistance of any medicine; though her eyes were before on the verge of little less than blindness."

"A gentleman of the law had his lodgings in Pall-Mall, on the north side: his front windows were exposed to the full noon

sun; while the back room, having no opening but into a small close yard, surrounded with high walls, was very dark: he wrote in the back room, and used to come from that into the front to breakfast, &c. His sight grew weak, and he had a constant pain in the balls of his eyes: he tried visual glasses, and spoke with oculists, equally in vain. Being soon convinced that the coming suddenly out of his dusky study, into the full blaze of sun-shine, and *that* very often in the day, had been the real cause of the disorder, he took new lodgings, by which, and forbearing to write by candle-light, he was very soon cured."

Blindness, or at least miserable weakness of sight, is often brought on by these unsuspected causes. Those who have weak eyes should therefore be particularly attentive to such circumstances; since prevention is easy, but the cure may be difficult, and sometimes impracticable.

I hope I shall not be thought to have stepped improperly out of the line of my profession, in recommending the following remedy, when a decay or weakness of sight comes on earlier than might reasonably be expected, and without any disease or apparent cause. If it does not answer the purpose, no ill will attend the use of it. Put two ounces of rosemary leaves into a bottle, with a pint of brandy; shake it once or twice every day; let this stand three days, then strain it off; mix a tea-spoonful of the clear tincture with four tea-spoonfuls of warm water, and wash the inside of the eye with it every night, moving about the eye-lids, that some of it may get perfectly in between the lid and the eye. By degrees put less and less water to the tincture, till at length a tea-spoonful of each may be mixed for use.

Whatever care, however, be taken, and though every precaution be attended to, with scrupulous exactness; yet, as we advance in years, the powers of our frame gradually decay; an effect which is generally first perceived in the organs of vision.

Age is, however, by no means an absolute criterion, by which we can decide upon the sight; nor will it prove the necessity of wearing spectacles. For, on the one hand, there are many whose sight is preserved in all its vigour, to an advanced old age; while, on the other, it may be impaired in youth by a variety of causes, or be vitiated by internal maladies: nor is the defect either the same in different persons of the same age, or in the same person at different ages. In some, the failure is natural; in others, it is acquired.

From whatever causes this decay arises, an attentive consideration of the following rules, will enable every one to judge for himself, when his sight may be assisted or preserved by the use of spectacles.

1. When we are obliged to remove small objects to a considerable distance from the eye, in order to see them distinctly.

2. If we find it necessary to get more light than formerly; as, for instance, to place the candle between the eye and the object.

3. If, on looking at, or attentively considering, a near object, it becomes confused, or appears to have a kind of mist before it.

4. When the letters of a book run one into the other, and hence appear double and treble.

5. If the eyes are so fatigued by a little exercise, that we are obliged to shut them from time to time, and relieve them by looking at different objects.

When all these circumstances concur, or any of them separately take place, it will be necessary to seek assistance from glasses, which will now ease the eyes, and in some degree check their tendency to grow flatter: whereas, if they be not assisted in time, the flatness will be considerably increased, and the eyes be weakened by the efforts they are compelled to exert.

We are now able to decide upon a very important question, and say how far spectacles may be said to be preservers of the sight. It is plain they can be reccommended as such, to those only whose eyes are beginning to fail; and it would be as absurd, to advise the use of spectacles to those who feel none of the foregoing inconveniences, as it would be for a man in health to use crutches to save his legs. But those who feel those inconveniences, should immediately take to spectacles, which, by enabling them to see objects nearer, and by facilitating the union of the rays of light on the retina, will support and preserve the sight.

When the eye sensibly flattens, all delay is dangerous; and the longer those who feel the want of assistance, defer the use of spectacles, the more they will increase the failure of the eye. There are too many who procrastinate the use of them, till at last they are obliged to use glasses of ten or twelve inches focus, instead of those of 36 or 40, which would otherwise have suited them; thus preferring a real evil to avoid one that is imaginary. Mr. Thomin mentions several deplorable cases of this kind, particularly one of a lady, who, through false shame, had abstained from wearing spectacles so long a time, that at last it was impossible to suit her, but with those that are adapted to eyes that have been couched. Whereas the instances are numerous of those, who, by using glasses of a long focus at the first approaches of long-sightedness, have brought back their eyes to their natural sight, and been able to lay aside their spectacles for years.

These considerations point out clearly the advantages that may be obtained by a proper choice of spectacles on first wearing them, and the importance of making such a choice; as the eye will endeavour to conform itself to any improper focus, and then be brought into a state of extreme age, at a much earlier period than would have happened, had they been suited with

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judgment. There are very few opticians but what must have seen instances of those, who, by habituating their eyes to too short a focus, or too great a magnifying power, have so injured those tender organs, as to deprive them of future assistance from glasses. This frequently happens to those who purchase their spectacles from hawkers and pedlars, men equally ignorant of the science of optics and the fabric of the eye.

Let it, therefore, be carefully remembered, that magnifying power is not the point that is most to be considered in the choice of spectacles; but their conformity to our sight, their enabling us to see distinctly, and with ease, at the distance we were accustomed to read or work before the use of spectacles became necessary: or, in other words, glasses should so alter the disposition of the rays, at their entrance into the eyes, as will be most suitable to procure distinct vision at a proper distance; an end of the highest import; as in this respect it places the aged nearly on a level with the young, and enables him to read a common print with ease, at a period when, without assistance, he could hardly distinguish one letter from another.

In proportion as the eye flattens, glasses of greater convexity are to be used; but still we should be careful not to go too far: for if they magnify too much, they will fatigue the eye. The most certain criterion of their being too old for the actual state of the sight, is our being obliged to bring the objects we look at through them, nearer the eye than the common distance of distinct vision. All glasses that cause us to depart much on either side from the limits of distinct vision, may be considered as ill adapted, and prejudicial to the sight.

Those who are careful in following a regular gradation, may preserve their eyes to the latest period of old age, and even then be able to enjoy the comforts and pleasures arising from distinct vision. Do not therefore precipitate these changes, lest you should absorb too soon the resources of art, and not be able to find spectacles of sufficient power to relieve the eye. One precaution more is necessary: by no means put on any spectacles but your own; for taking up and wearing glasses different from those to which your eye is accommodated, has the same effect as trying a variety at an optician's shop: this variety fatigues and disturbs the sight. All irregularity is injurious; and much of the preservation of the sight depends on keeping it uniform, as well with regard to the glasses, as the degrees of light.

There are many who find the effect of candle-light so different from the purer light of day, that they are obliged to use spectacles by night, though they can do very well without them in the day. These, when the eye has become more flat, will find it advisable to have two pair of spectacles, one to use by day; the other, magnifying somewhat more, appropriated for

the night: by this means nearly the same quantity of light may be brought to act upon the retina at one time as the other. Thus the eyes will be less fatigued, and longer maintain their natural vigour.

Method of taking out Spots of Ink from Linen.

[From the Journal de Normande.]

SPOTS of ink, it is well known, will absolutely ruin the finest linen. Lemon juice will by no means answer the purpose of taking them out. The spots, indeed, disappear, but the malignity of the ink still adheres to the linen. It corrodes it; and a hole never fails to appear, some time after, in that part where the spot was made. Would you wish for a remedy equally certain, without being subject to the same inconvenience? Take a mould candle, the tallow of which is commonly of the purest kind: melt it, and dip the spotted part of the linen in the melted tallow: then put it to the wash. It will come perfectly white from the hands of the laundress, and there will never be any hole in the spotted part. This experiment has been tried often, and always with great success.

INFIDELITY is often punished with credulity. The prediction of a mad lifeguard-man was attended to in London by those who never heeded the prophecies of Isaiah or Jeremiah; and an impudent mountebank sold a large cargo of pills, which, as he told the people, were *excellent against earthquakes.*

SOME people rate the modern improvements in religious knowledge by the volumes of metaphysical subtilties written upon the subject; as the Emperor Heliogabalus formed an estimate of the greatness of Rome, from ten thousand pounds weight of cobwebs which had been found in that city.

NO *cloud* will overshadow a true Christian, but his faith will discern a *rainbow* in it.

Nourished up in the words of faith.

"IT is one thing for a man to enlighten his understanding, to fill his imagination, and to load his memory; and another, to nourish his heart with it. A man nourishes himself with it, if he live upon it, if he change it into his own substance, if he practice it himself, if he render it proper and familiar unto himself, so as to make it the food and nourishment with which he ought to feed others."

A PERSON being asked if he thought a *papist* would be saved? "You may be saved," replied he, "without knowing that."

IT is not every one who thinks himself a Solomon, that has the wisdom of him who was king of Israel.

[The following admired passage on War, from the pen of Miss HANNAH MOORE, is adapted to the present unhappy situation of the world.]

* * * * * * "O WAR! what art thou?"
After the brightest conquest, what remains
Of all thy glories! For the vanquish'd, chains!
For the proud victor, what? Alas! to reign
O'er desolated nations! a drear waste,
By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
Unpeopl'd! naked plains and ravag'd fields
Succeed to smiling harvests, and the fruits
Of peaceful olive, luscious fig and vine!
Here rifled temples are the cavern'd dens
Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene;
There pop'lous cities blacken in the sun;
And in the gen'ral wreck proud palaces
Lie undistinguish'd, save by the dun smoke
Of recent conflagrations. When the song
Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph swell'd,
Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride,
How is the grateful harmony profan'd
With the sad dissonance of virgin cries,
Who mourn their brothers slain! of matron's dear,
Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons!
How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with blood,
And soil'd with widows' tears!"

[The *strength* of virtue and *impotence* of vice are beautifully portrayed, by MILTON, in the ensuing lines.]

Literary Tablet.

* * * * * * THIS I hold firm,
Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt;
Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm,
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory;
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness; when at last,
Gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change,
Self-fed and self-consum'd. If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.

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THE Maritime Law of Europe is, at the present day, the most interesting branch of the law of nations. It deserves to be studied by statesmen, lawyers, publicists, and by all who are called to discharge the duties of public ministers or agents. Notwithstanding its importance, the subject has been but slightly touched upon by the most celebrated publicists. It is surprising, that, in an age when the attention of the powers of Europe is generally directed towards commerce and navigation, with an energy and perseverance unknown to former times, that not a single writer has attempted to treat of this subject in a scientific and systematic manner. M. Azuni is the first who has attempted to unfold the principles of Maritime Jurisprudence in their full extent, and to reduce them to a regular system. The author, from his youth, has been engaged in employments connected with maritime law, and had prepared himself for the execution of the present performance, by the composition of several important works on political economy, maritime jurisprudence and commerce.

The work was originally published at Florence, in 1795. Another edition appeared at Trieste, in 1796. It has since been translated into most of the languages of Europe. The author, having carefully revised and corrected his work, has, during the present year, republished it, at Paris, in the French language, with large additions. From this improved edition, the translation, now offered to the public, has been made.

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